

SIMPSONS ROASTING ON AN OPEN FIRE

by

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ACT ONE

EXT. STREET - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

It's snowing. The Simpsons' car zips down an icy street. The brakes are put on a little too hard and the car SKIDS off the road into a snowbank.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

HOMER is driving with MARGE in the front seat. MAGGIE sits in her carseat in the back.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

They get out of the car. Maggie is incredibly bundled up in a snow suit. Her arms stand out straight sideways -- like a starfish. They head for the auditorium.

MARGE

Careful, Homer.

HOMER

It's no time to be careful.

We're late.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

It's snowing. We pull in on the school's illuminated activity board. It reads "Annual Christmas Pageant. 3 1/2 Stars! -- Springfield Shopper."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

On the stage, the CHOIR is singing "OH LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM."

Homer, Marge and Maggie enter the auditorium. They walk down the aisle looking for seats. They enter a row, jostling people as they go.

MARGE

(HUSHED VOICE) Excuse us. Pardon
me... excuse me...

HOMER (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

Hey, Norman. How's it going? So you
got dragged down here too...heh, heh,
heh. Where's a program? There's no
program.

Someone SCREAMS.

PERSON IN AUDIENCE

(TO HOMER) Watch it!

HOMER

Pardon my galoshes. (CHUCKLES)

The Simpsons find seats and sit down. The choir finishes singing. The crowd APPLAUDS. PRINCIPAL SKINNER steps up to the podium.

SKINNER

(UNREHEARSED) Wasn't that wonderful?

And now,

"Santas of Many Lands," as presented by
the entire second grade class.

MARGE

Oh... Lisa's class.

The curtain opens and JANEY, dressed as Santa with red lederhosen, walks on to the stage.

JANEY

(SHY & NERVOUS) Frohlich weihnachten --
that's German for Merry Christmas. In
Germany, Santa's servant Ruprecht gives
presents to good children and whipping
rods to the parents of bad ones.

She curtsies.

CLOSE-UP

of Maggie still in her snowsuit and sweating profusely.

BACK TO STAGE

Janey has exited the stage. TODD, dressed in a Japanese priest's kimono, walks on stage.

TODD

Meri Kurimasu. I am Hotseiosha, a
Japanese priest who acts like Santa
Claus. I have eyes in the back of my
head so children better behave when I'm
nearby.

Todd turns around and we see that he has fake eyes in back
of his head. The audience GASPS. Todd exits the stage.
The entire auditorium is darkened. There is a drum roll.

MR. LARGO (O.S.)

And now, presenting Lisa Simpson, as
Tawanga, the Santa Claus of the South
Seas.

A frantic jungle drum begins. LISA comes on stage wearing
a huge Polynesian headdress, a coconut bra and grass skirt.
She is holding fire torches and she does an incredibly
elaborate dance.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

at the podium.

SKINNER

The fourth grade will now favor us with
a melody, medley of holiday favorites.

The stage curtain parts to reveal BART'S fourth grade
class, standing on bleachers. The children begin to sing
"Jingle Bells."

CHILDREN

(SINGING) Dashing through the snow, in
a one-horse open sleigh, o'er the
fields we go, laughing all the way...

MARGE AND HOMER

in the audience.

MARGE

(WHISPERING) Isn't that sweet, Homer?

He sings like a little angel.

BART

We see that he is singing alternate lyrics.

BART

Jingle Bells, Batman smells, Robin laid
an egg. The Batmobile broke its wheel,
the Joker got away.

DISSOLVE TO:

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

at podium.

SKINNER

The fifth grade will now favor us with
a scene from Charles Dickens' "A
Christmas Carol".

HOMER

(GROANS) How many grades does this
school have?

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The family is gathered around the fireplace. Bart and Lisa lie on the floor, diligently writing on separate sheets of paper. Homer is untangling exterior Christmas lights. Marge is proofing the Simpsons' family Christmas letter.

MARGE

"Dear friends of the Simpson family, we had some sadness and some gladness this year. First the sadness. Our little cat, Snowball, was unexpectedly run over and went to kitty heaven. But we bought a new little cat, Snowball II, so I guess life goes on. Speaking of life going on, Grampa is still with us, feisty as ever. Maggie is walking by herself. Lisa got straight "A"s, and Bart, well... we love Bart. The magic of the season has touched us all...

HOMER

(MAD) Marge, haven't you finished that stupid letter yet?

MARGE (CONT'D)

"...Homer sends his love. Happy Holidays.

HOMER

Marge!

MARGE

The Simpsons."

HOMER

(MAD) Where's the extension cord?

MARGE

In the utility drawer.

HOMER

Sorry. I'm just a big kid and I love
Christmas so much.

Homer goes to the drawer and opens it, pulling out a very
tangled extension cord.

HOMER

(GRUMBLING) ... every year, stupid
cord.

He starts unravelling it.

MARGE

All right, children. Let me have those
letters. I'll send them to Santa's
workshop at the North Pole.

BART

Oh, please. (TO LISA) There's only
one fat guy that brings us presents and
his name ain't Santa.

Marge looks at Lisa's list.

CLOSE-UP

on Lisa's list shows a Pony, followed by Pony, followed by
Pony, Pony, and Pony.

MARGE

A pony? Oh, Lisa. You've asked for
that for three years and I keep telling
you that Santa can't fit a pony into
his sleigh. Can't you take a hint?

LISA

But I really want a pony and I've been
really, really good this year.

MARGE

(MURMURS) Oh dear. Maybe Bart is a
little more realistic.

She looks at Bart's list.

MARGE

(SHOCKED) A tattoo!

HOMER

A what!

BART

Yeah, they're cool and they last the
rest of the your life.

MARGE

(FHOMER, MARGE AND MAGGIE

in audience. Homer notices one of several people in the
audience videotaping. Homer turns to Marge, who is holding
Maggie.

HOMER

(WHISPERS) You know, we could cherish
moments like these for the rest of our
lives if we only had one of those video
betamecallits.

MARGE

(COYLY) Maybe you should ask Santa...

HOMER

(EXCITED) Whoo ho.

DISSOLVE TO:

(FIRMLY) You will not be getting a
tattoo for Christmas.

HOMER

Yeah. If you want one, you'll have to
pay for it out of your own allowance.

BART

All right!

MARGE

Homer!

The phone rings. SFX: PHONE RINGING

Homer crosses the living room and answers the phone.

HOMER

Hello.

Marge's sister PATTY is on the phone.

PATTY (V.O.)

Marge, please.

HOMER

Who's this?

PATTY (V.O.)

May I please speak to Marge?

HOMER

This is her sister, isn't it?

PATTY (V.O.)

Is Marge there?

HOMER

(GROWING MAD) Who shall I say is
calling?

PATTY (V.O)

Marge, please.

Homer hands the phone over to Marge.

HOMER

It's your sister.

Marge coos delightedly and takes the receiver.

MARGE

(INTO PHONE) Hello.

PATTY (V.O.)

Hello, Marge. It's Patty. Selma and I
couldn't be more excited about seeing
our baby sister for Christmas eve.

MARGE

Well, Homer and I are looking forward
to your visit, too.

In the b.g., Homer mimes sticking a finger down his throat
and makes gagging SOUNDS and exits.

PATTY (V.O.)

Somehow I doubt that Homer's excited.
Of all the men you could have married I
don't know why you picked the one whose
always so rude to us.

MARGE

(MURMURS)

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

A grimly determined Homer balancing on the ladder as he hangs strings of Christmas lights on the roof line. A moth-eaten Santa dummy is leaning against the chimney. Homer falls off the roof and lands in the snow with a THUD. He connects two extension cords.

HOMER

Okay, kids. Prepare to be dazzled.

(CALLING) Marge! Turn on the juice!

WIDE SHOT

We see five measly little lights blink on in random spots on the roof line.

HOMER (CON'T)

What do you think, kids?

LISA

Nice try, Dad.

BART

(LITTLE DISAPPOINTED MOAN)

FLANDERS (V.O.)

(FROM NEXT DOOR) Just hold your horses, son. Hey, Simpson.

HOMER

What is it, Flanders?

FLANDERS

Do you think this looks okay?

Everyone turns to look at the house next door where Homer's neighbor, Flanders, plugs in his light display. In moving lights resembling a Las Vegas marquee, it spells out M-E-R-R-Y X-M-A-S. Then flashes MERRY XMAS rhythmically. The entire roof then lights up and we see a MECHANICAL SANTA and elves.

MECHANICAL SANTA

Ho ho ho. Ho ho ho.

LISA

(ADMIRINGLY) Ooh, pretty.

BART

Wow. Neato.

They burst out in applause.

HOMER

(TO BART & LISA) It's too bright.

(MUTTERING TO HIMSELF) That Flanders,
what a big show-off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

It's a winter wonderland covered with snow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The Simpsons have just finished breakfast.

MARGE

Kids, you want to go Christmas
shopping?

LISA

I do!

BART

All right, the mall!

MARGE

Go get your money.

Lisa and Bart run off.

HOMER

Spill it, Marge. Where have you been
hiding the Christmas money?

MARGE

Oh, I have my secrets. Turn around.

Homer turns around. Marge parts her hair and lifts out a large jar filled with money.

MARGE (CONT'D)

You can look now.

Homer turns back.

HOMER

Oh! Big jar this year.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Close up of mall with sign "Springfield Mall - Where Santa Shops."

PULL WAY BACK

To reveal parking lot filled with cars. Marge parks her car at very last spot, Row ZZ.

INT. MALL - DAY

Marge, holding Maggie, and Lisa stand in front of a toy store with a delightful display of Santa and his Elves.

PAN OVER TO BART

Looking in a store window which reads "THE HAPPY SAILOR TATTOO PARLOR." There are many tattoos displayed in the window. We see a sign in the window showing heart tattoo that says "Mother." Another sign reads "Xmas Special, up to twelve letters only \$15.95. The perfect gift!"

ANGLE

on Bart imagining himself with "Mother" tattooed on his arm. Marge looks at him lovingly.

MARGE

Oh, Bart, that's so sweet. It's the
best present a mother could get and it
makes you look so dangerous.

Bart walks into tattoo shop.

INT. TATTOO SHOP

The Tattoo Man is a bearded Biker.

BART (TO TATTOO MAN)

One "mother," please.

TATTOO MAN

Wait a minute. How old are you?

BART

Twenty-one, sir.

TATTOO MAN

Oh really? What year were you born?

BART

Uh. Let's see. Minus twenty
one...carry the...one from nine is
eight...

TATTOO MAN

All right, all right. I haven't got
all day. Get in the chair.

INT. NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - DAY

Homer marks a clipboard as he investigates various dials.
XMAS MUZAK plays in the background. We HEAR THROBBING of
Radioactivity in background.

HOMER

(CHECKING DIALS) Mm-hmm... Mmm-hmm...

Mmm-hmm...

Homer passes an dial where the needle has passed from the yellow "DANGER" area into the red "EXTREME DANGER" area.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(OBLIVIOUS) Mmm-hmm.

Muzak stops suddenly. SFX: RECORD SCRATCH.

SMITHERS (V.O.)

Attention all personnel! Please keep
working during the following
announcement.

Homer puts down his pad and starts to eat some donuts.

SMITHERS

And now, our boss and friend, Mr.
Burns.

MR. BURNS (V.O.)

Hello, I'm proud to announce that we
have been able to increase safety...

BURNS' OFFICE

Burns is on the mike. Smithers stands in the corner.
Burns looks at him and he flinches.

MR. BURNS (CONT'D)

... here at the plant without
increasing the cost to the consumer, or
affecting management pay raises.
However, for you semi-skilled workers,
there will be no Christmas bonuses.

INT. PLANT

The plant workers react with AD LIBS: "No bonuses!", "That stinks", "What!", "Oh no", "This is a fine howdoyado", "Those cheapskates", etc.

BURNS (CONT'D) (V.O.)

One more thing, Merry Christmas.

SFX: MUZAK STARTS AGAIN JOINED BY SOUNDS OF DISGRUNTLED WORKERS.

HOMER

Thank God for the big jar.

INT. MALL

Marge, Maggie and Lisa stand by the toy store.

MARGE

Where's that Bart?

BART (O.S.)

(SCREAMS)

Marge and Lisa exchange a look and run toward the tattoo parlor.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR

Marge, carrying Maggie, with Lisa in tow, bursts in to find the Bearded Biker working on Bart's arm. They both look up, surprised.

CLOSEUP

On tattoo. It says, "MOTH".

CLOSEUP

On Marge. Her eyes are fiery red, her hair stands on end, her nostrils flare. Marge GASPS.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOR

Marge, still holding onto Maggie, whips Bart out by the arm. Lisa follows obediently behind.

SFX: BULLWHIP CRACKING

Marge drags Bart along as he protests.

BART

But Mom, I thought you'd like it.

MARGE

Why would I like a tattoo that says
Moth?

Right next door to the tattoo parlor is "Dr. Zitsofsky Dermatology Clinic." A sign in the window reads "Tattoos removed by laser." Marge pulls Bart into the clinic.

INT. DERMATOLOGY CLINIC

A DOCTOR talks to the Simpsons in his office.

DOCTOR ZITSOFSKY

Yes, Mrs. Simpson, we can remove your
son's tattoo. It's a simple routine
involving lasers.

BART

Cool!

DOCTOR ZITSOFSKY

However, it is rather expensive and we
must insist on a cash payment up front.

MARGE

Cash?

DOCTOR ZITSOFSKY

Ah-hmmm, ah-hmmm.

She unscrews her big jar and pours money onto the table.
Crumpled-up dollars and a voluminous amount of change pours
out.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Thank God for Homer's Christmas bonus.

INT. LABORATORY

In a cavernous laboratory, Bart is strapped to a stainless-steel gurney. He stares down the barrel of an enormous chrome ray-gun. Marge peers over the doctor's shoulder.

BART

(AWESTRUCK) Ay-Caramba!

The doctor puts on a welder's mask and turns on the laser.
SFX: LASER HUM

DOCTOR ZITSOFISKY

Now, whatever you do, boy, don't
squirm. You don't want to get this
sucker near your eye or your groin.

(CHUCKLES)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bart sits on the couch, his arm in a bandage. Lisa and Maggie sit next to him. Lisa is poking Bart's bandage.

BART

Ow! Quit it.

Lisa pokes him again.

BART

Ow! Quit it!

Maggie pokes him.

BART

Ow! Quit it!

Homer enters. Sees Bart's bandage.

HOMER

Hey! What's with this?

Homer pokes Bart's arm.

BART

Ow! Quit it. It used to be a real
boss tattoo.

LISA

But Mom had to spend all the Christmas
money having it surgically removed.

HOMER

(DISBELIEVINGLY) What? No...

Marge enters carrying the empty jar.

HOMER

(GASPS) It's true. The jar's empty.
Oh my God, we're ruined. Christmas is
cancelled. No presents for anyone.

MARGE

Don't worry, Homer. We'll just have to
stretch your Christmas bonus even
further this year.

HOMER

(SHRIEKS)

MARGE

Homer?

HOMER

(NONCHALANT BEYOND BELIEF) Oh, yeah my
Christmas bonus. (CHUCKLE) How silly
of me. This will be the best Christmas
yet. The best any family ever had.
Heh. Heh. Ho! Ho! Ho!

Homer exits.

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Homer stands dazed in front of the house. Snow is falling
around him. The Simpson's paltry decorations are a stark
contrast to the Flanders house next door.

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marge and Homer are in bed. Marge is going over her Christmas list. Homer looks worried.

Marge looks at Homer.

MARGE

I get the feeling there's something you
haven't told me, Homer.

HOMER

(GRUNTS) I love you, Marge.

MARGE

Homer, you tell me that all the time.

HOMER

Oh, good. Because I do love you and I
don't deserve you as much as a guy with
a big fat wallet and a credit card that
won't set off that horrible beeping.

MARGE

But I think it does have something to do with your Christmas bonus. I keep asking for it, but...

HOMER

Marge, let me be honest with you.

MARGE

Yes..

HOMER

(BEAT) I want to do the Christmas shopping this year.

MARGE

Well, sure, okay...

Marge hands Homer the shopping list and shuts off the light. We see the whites of Homer's wide open, nervous eyes.

EXT. "CIRCUS OF VALUES - FORMERLY THE BARGAIN HUT" - DAY

There's a sign in the window that reads "Nothing over \$5.00." Homer walks in.

INT. CIRCUS OF VALUES - CONTINUOUS

Homer walks down the aisles with a basket. He is talking to himself.

HOMER

Let's see. Marge, Marge, Marge. Oooh, look! Pantyhouse. Practical and alluring. (AS HE LOADS THEM IN BASKET) A six-pack... Oh! Only four ninety nine.

Down another aisle.

HOMER (CONT'D)

What's this? Oh! A Starsky and Hutch
lunchbox. Wait 'til Lisa's classmates
get a load of this.

He puts in his basket and keeps walking.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Oooh... Pads of paper. I bet Bart can
think of a million things to do with
these. That just leaves little Maggie.
Oh look, a little squeak-toy. (HE
HOLDS UP A RUBBER PORK CHOP AND
SQUEEZES). It says it's for dogs, but
she can't read...

Homer stands on line at the checkout counter. He picks up
a packet of breath mints.

HOMER

(TO HIMSELF) And for me, some breath
mints... which the family will
appreciate, too.

EXT. CIRCUS OF VALUES - CONTINUOUS

Homer emerges from the store carrying a little brown bag.
Flanders and his son are coming down the sidewalk.
Flanders is carrying so many gift-wrapped packages he can't
see where he's going. He collides with Homer, sending them
both sprawling and gifts flying.

FLANDERS

Ow. (FRIENDLY) Oh, Simpson, it's you.

HOMER

(BITTERLY) Hello, Flanders.

FLANDERS

(LOOKING AROUND AT SCATTERED PRESENTS)

Oh my, what a little mess we've got here! Well, which ones are yours and which ones are mine?

HOMER

Well, let's see.

FLANDERS

(QUICKLY) This one's mine. And this one's mine. This one's mine... and this.

HOMER

(ANGRILY) They're all yours.

TODD FLANDERS

Hey, Mr. Simpson. You dropped your pork chop.

Todd holds the rubber pork chop next to Homer's face and SQUEAKS it repeatedly.

HOMER

(GRABBING IT) Gimme that!

Flanders and his son, Todd, start to walk away, leaving Homer on the ground with his paltry bag of gifts.

FLANDERS

Well, happy holidays, Simpson.

TODD

Gee Dad, this is gonna be the best Christmas ever.

FLANDERS

You bet.

As Homer puts his pork chop back in the bag a big tear rolls down his cheek.

INT. MOE'S TAVERN - DAY

MOE wears a Santa hat as he tends bar. Homer sits at the bar, glumly.

MOE

What's the matter, Homer? Somebody
leave a lump of coal in your stocking?
You've been sitting there sucking on
that beer all day.

HOMER

So?

MOE

It's Christmas!

Moe hands Homer a candy cane.

HOMER

(DOWN) Thanks, Moe.

Homer sits and sucks his candy cane

Barney enters wearing a Santa Claus outfit. He looks jolly.

BARNEY

Drinks all around!

Moe looks around. It's just Homer and Barney.

HOMER

What's with the crazy getup, Barn?

BARNEY

I got me a part-time job working as a
Santa down at the mall.

HOMER

Wow. Can I do that?

BARNEY

I don't know. They're pretty
selective. (BURPS)

INT. MALL - PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Homer is speaking to an INTERVIEWER behind a desk.

INTERVIEWER

Do you like children?

HOMER

What do you mean? All the time? Even
when they're nuts?

Interviewer looks up from his papers.

HOMER

Oh I certainly do.

INTERVIEWER

Welcome aboard... Pending your
successful completion of our training
program...that is.

INT. SANTA SCHOOL - NIGHT

All the STUDENTS are wearing Santa outfits. The TEACHER
has a black goatee, glasses, is bald and looks
professorial. He is leading the class.

STUDENTS

(IN UNISON) Ho ho ho. Ho ho ho. Ho ho
ho. Ho ho ho.

Homer is raising his hand.

TEACHER

What is it now, Simpson?

HOMER

Huh, when do we get paid?

TEACHER

Not a dime till Christmas Eve. Now,
from the top.

STUDENTS

(WEAKLY, DISAPPOINTED) Ho ho ho. Ho
ho ho.

INT. SANTA SCHOOL - LATER

Homer stands, addressing the class nervously.

HOMER

Dasher, Dancer,

TEACHER

Hmmm hmmm.

HOMER

Prancer,

TEACHER

Hmmm hmmm.

HOMER

Nixon, Comet, Cupid... Donna Dixon.

TEACHER

Sit down, Simpson.

INT. SANTA SCHOOL - LATER

Homer is sitting with the teacher on his lap in front of the class.

HOMER

And what would you like, little boy?

TEACHER

You're not really Santa, tubby.

HOMER

Why you little eggheaded...!

TEACHER

No, no, Homer. If such an emergency arises, just tell them Santa's very busy this time of year and you're one of his helpers.

HOMER

(SMACKING HIS FOREHEAD) Oh, I knew that one, too.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Homer enters and removes his coat. Marge emerges from the kitchen.

MARGE

Homer! Why are you seven hours late?

HOMER

(EXHAUSTED) Not a word, Marge. I'm heading straight for the tub.

MARGE

But Homer. My sisters are here. Don't
you want to say hello?

HOMER

(SHUDDERS)

Marge leads Homer into the living room. Marge's TWIN SISTERS, Patty and Selma (both with huge hair, but not as huge as Marge's) sit on the couch with Bart and Lisa. Patty has Bart on her lap and is pinching his cheeks as Selma fusses with Lisa's hair. Both kids squirm to get away.

BART

Oh, Dad, you're finally home.

LISA

Daddy! We're so glad to see you!

They jump off the couch and run to hug Homer.

HOMER

What? Why? Oh yeah. (FORCED
POLITENESS) Hello Patty, hello Selma.
How was your trip?

SELMA

Fine.

HOMER

You both look well.

PATTY

Thank you.

Homer starts to leave.

HOMER

Yeah, well, Merry Christmas.

SELMA

(TO PATTY) Oh, it's Christmas? You
wouldn't know it around here.

Homer stops in his tracks.

HOMER

And why is that?

PATTY

Well, for one thing, there's no tree.

HOMER

Well, I was just on my way out to get
one.

LISA

Can we go too, Dad?

BART

Can we, can we?

HOMER

No!

Homer starts putting his coat back on and exits.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Homer drives along. It is snowing lightly. He passes a Christmas tree lot with a sign surrounded by lights reading "All trees \$75". He continues driving, passing another lot with a sign "Trees \$60 and Up". He goes on past another lot with a sign reading "Xmas Trees - Slightly Irregular - \$45 and Up". All the trees are bizarrely shaped.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE UP

Footprints in the snow. We HEAR a CHAINSAW. We follow the footprints past a sign reading "No Trespassing" to Homer who is sawing down a tree. The tree falls to the ground.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, you. What do you think you're
doing?

HOMER

Uh oh.

Homer grabs the tree and the saw and starts to run.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, come back here.

SFX: GUNSHOTS, BLOODHOUNDS

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Homer drives along with the tree in the back of his car.
There are bloodhounds following him.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marge, Lisa, Bart, Maggie, and Marge's sisters regard a
large pine tree with a birdhouse in it and initials carved
on it. Homer stands holding the tree, looking proud.

HOMER

So, what do you think kids? Beauty,
isn't it?

BART

Yeah, Homer.

LISA

Way to go, Dad.

SELMA

Why is there a birdhouse in it?

HOMER

That's an ornament.

PATTY

Do I smell gunpowder?

INT. MALL - DAY

A bunch of kids standing in line to get pictures taken with Santa (Homer).

A little boy with a donut sits on Homer's lap.

LITTLE BOY

And then I want some Robotoids... and
then I want a Goop Monster... and then
I want a great big, giant...

HOMER

Ah, Son. You don't need all that junk.
I'm sure you've already got something
much more important, a decent home and
a loving father who would do anything
for you. (W.C. FIELDS-ISH) Gimme a
bite of that donut, I couldn't afford
lunch.

We see a flash and hear the CLICK of a camera and

FREEZE FRAME

on a picture of Donut, Homer's jaws open as horrified
little boy tries to recoil with his donut.

IN ANOTHER AREA

Bart, Milhouse and Lewis watch Santa.

MILHOUSE

Get a load of that quote unquote Santa.

LEWIS

I can't believe those kids are falling
for it.

BART

Hey, Milhouse. I dare you to sit on his lap.

MILHOUSE

Oh yeah? Well, I dare you to yank his beard off.

BART

Ah, touche!

Bart gets in line. All the kids in line are half the size of Bart.

HOMER

The Elf is taking a kid off Homer's lap.

LITTLE GIRL

I hope you feel better, Santa.

HOMER

I will when Mrs. Claus's sisters get out of town. Thanks for listening, kid.

The Elf puts Bart on Homer's lap, lifting him with a GRUNT. Homer GASPS with recognition.

BART

Hey Santa, what's shaking?

HOMER

(DISGUISED VOICE) What's your name, Bart... ner? -- er -- Little partner?

BART

I'm Bart Simpson. Who the hell are you?

HOMER

(THROUGH GRITTED TEETH) I'm Jolly Old
Saint Nick.

BART

Oh yeah? We'll just see about that.

Bart starts to reach for Homer's beard.

We see a flash and HEAR the CLICK of a camera and

FREEZE FRAME

on a still picture of horrified Bart holding the beard
stretched away from Homer's face.

BART

Homer!

HOMER

I want a word with you in Santa's
Workshop, little boy. (TO ELF) Cover
for me, Elfie.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Homer and Bart hunch down in the tiny workshop.

BART

Don't kill me, Dad. I didn't know it
was you.

HOMER

Nobody knows. It's a secret. I didn't
get my bonus this year, but to keep the
family from missing out on Christmas,
I'd do anything.

BART

I'll say, Dad. You must really love us
to sink so low.

HOMER

(BREAKING DOWN) Let's not get mushy,
son. I still have a job to do.

Homer tousles Bart's hair and turns to leave the workshop.

ext. workshop

There are kids lined up waiting.

HOMER

Hey, little ones, Santa's back. Ho!
Ho!

Homer BONKS his head on the doorway.

HOMER

Arrgh! -- (MUTTERS) Damn it to...

The kids recoil.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PERSONNEL OFFICE - NIGHT

The clock on the wall says 6:57. Homer and Bart wait in
line behind the other Santas. Homer reaches the head of
the line. He pats Bart.

HOMER

Ah, son. One day you're gonna know the
satisfaction of payday. Receiving a
big fat check for a job well done.

CLERK hands him a check.

CLERK

Simpson, Homer? Here you go.

HOMER

Come on, son. Let's go cash this baby
and get presents for -- (NOTICES)

Thirteen bucks? Hey, wait a minute!

CLERK

That's right. One hundred and twenty
dollars gross, less social security,

HOMER

Yeah.

CLERK

less unemployment insurance,

HOMER

But...

CLERK

less Santa training,

HOMER

Santa?

CLERK

less costume purchase,

HOMER

Wait a minute...

CLERK

less beard rental, less Christmas club.

HOMER

But... but...

CLERK

See you next year.

A dazed Homer MOANS.

BART

Come on, Dad. Let's go home.

HOMER

Thirteen bucks. We can't get anything
with thirteen bucks.

BARNEY carries his costume but still wears his beard and
Santa hat with a loud plaid sportcoat. He walks past
carrying his check.

BARNEY

All right! Thirteen big ones.
Springfield Downs, here I come.

HOMER

What?

BARNEY

You heard me. I'm going to the dog
track. I got a hot little puppy in the
fourth race. Wanna come?

HOMER

Sorry, Barney. I may be a total
washout as a father, but I'm not going
to take my son to some sleazy dog track
on Christmas eve.

BARNEY

Come on, Simpson. The dog's name is
Whirlwind, ten to one shot. Money in
the bank.

HOMER

Huh, huh.

BART

Ah, come on Dad, this can be the miracle that saves the Simpsons' Christmas. If TV has taught me anything, it's that miracles always happen to poor kids at Christmas. It happened to Tiny Tim, it happened to Charlie Brown, it happened to the Smurfs, and it's going to happen to us.

HOMER

(RESIGNED) Well, okay. Let's go.

They start to walk away.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Who's Tiny Tim?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Marge, her sisters, Grandpa, Lisa, and Maggie are watching the Happy Little Elves Christmas Special.

ON TV

BUBBLES

Hey Moldy, do you think Santa will be able to find Elf County under all this snow?

MOLDY

(SADLY) I doubt it, Bubbles. We'll be sad little elves this Christmas.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LISA

Oh no!

GRAMPA

Oh brother!

SELMA

(TO MARGE) Where's your husband?

PATTY

Yeah.

SELMA

It's getting late.

MARGE

He said he went caroling with Bart.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD DOWNS DOG TRACK - NIGHT

We see the dog track with a couple of winos outside. Homer, still in his Santa suit without beard and hat, and Bart, wearing the Santa hat, walk through the gate with Barney.

BART/BARNEY

(SINGING) We're in the money. We're
in the money. We got a lot of what it
takes to get along.

HOMER

(GRUMBLING) I can't believe I'm doing
this.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD DOWNS - GRANDSTAND

It is covered with tacky Christmas decorations. We hear a MUZAK version of "Oh Holy Night." Bart and Homer walk past another family.

LITTLE BOY

Can we open our presents now, Dad?

FATHER

You know the tradition, son. Not 'till
the eighth race.

EXT. PADDOCK - NIGHT

Lots of hyper greyhounds are being displayed before the race. Homer, Bart and Barney look them over.

HOMER

Hey Barney, which one is Whirlwind?

BARNEY

Number six. That's our lucky dog,
right over there.

HOMER

What! That scrawny little bag of
bones?

BART

Come on, Dad. They're all scrawny
little bags of bones.

HOMER

(RESIGNED) You're right. (SIGH) I
guess Whirlwind is our only hope for a
Merry Christmas.

ANNOUNCER

Attention racing fans. We have a late
scratch in the fourth race. Number
eight, Sir Galahad, will be replaced by
Santa's Little Helper. Once again, Sir
Galahad has been replaced by Santa's
Little Helper.

HOMER

(GASPS) Bart, did you hear that? What
a name -- "Santa's Little Helper."
It's a sign! It's an omen!

BART

It's a coincidence, Dad.

INT. SPRINGFIELD DOWN - BETTING WINDOW

They reach the betting window.

HOMER

(TO TICKETSELLER) What are the odds on
Santa's Little Helper?

TICKETSELLER

Ninety nine to one.

HOMER

(THRILLED) Whoa! Ninety nine times
thirteen equals MER-RY CHRISTMAS!

BART

I got a bad feeling about this.

HOMER

Don't you believe in me, son?

BART

Uh...

HOMER

Come on, boy. Sometimes your faith is
all that keeps me going

BART

(RESIGNED) Oh, go for it, Dad.

HOMER

That's my boy. (TO TICKETSELLER)

Everything on Santa's Little Helper.

Homer takes his ticket and he and Bart leave.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marge, Maggie, Lisa, Grampa, Patty and Selma sit watching
television.

ON TV

BUBBLES (V.O.)

Thanks, Brainy. Your atomic snow
eliminator really did the trick.

BRAINY (V.O.)

Donka. This is the best Christmas Elf
County ever had.

ELF #1

Three cheers for Brainy.

ELVES (ALL TOGETHER)

Hip hip hooray, hip hip hooray, hip hip
hooray.

LISA

Yay!

Maggie CLAPS.

GRAMPA

Unadulterated pap. If you ask me, the
"Happy Little Elves Christmas Special"
gets more boring every time I see it.

PATTY

It's almost nine o'clock.

MARGE

Hmmm.

SELMA

(SIGHS) Grampa, I don't mean to
criticize your son in front of you...

GRAMPA

I don't mind, have at him.

SELMA

It seems to me that Christmas Eve is the time for family togetherness and joy.

GRAMPA

Hmmm hmmm.

PATTY

(SOFTLY TO SELMA) It's so typical of the big doofus to spoil it all.

LISA

What, Aunt Patty?

PATTY

Oh, nothing dear. I'm just deriding your father as a man. Go watch your show.

INT. SPRINGFIELD DOWNS

Homer and Bart make their way to the stands.

HOMER

(KISSING THE TICKET - SMACK SMACK) Come on, Bart. Kiss the ticket for good luck, not that we need it. Heh heh heh.

BART KISSES THE TICKET. SFX: THE POST BUGLE

ANGLE

On racetrack.

ANNOUNCER

Here comes Screwy the mechanical
rabbit. And they're off!

The dogs start out of the gate.

INTERCUT WITH:

Homer and Bart in the stands.

HOMER & BART

Come on, "Santa's Little Helper!"

BART

(AD LIBS) Come on, dog. Go, man. Go.
Come on Santa's Little Helper. Run
baby run.

HOMER

(AD LIBS) Come on Santa's Little
Helper. Go, go, go. Run your tail
off.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

It's "Whirlwind" in the lead...

CLOSEUP

on racedogs.

ANNOUNCER (V.O. CONT'D)

And coming up on the left is
"Quadruped," followed by Dog O' War and
"Fido."

HOMER

Go! Go!

BART

Go Santa's Little Helper!

HOMER

Come on, boy.

BART

Come on, boy. Go man, go!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And with a lock on last place... it's
"Santa's Little Helper."

HOMER

(GROANS LIKE HE'S HAVING A HEART
ATTACK)

ANNOUNCER

Around the clubhouse turn, Whirlwind is
taking out a big lead.

BART

Don't worry, Dad. Maybe this is just
for suspense before the miracle
happens.

ANNOUNCER

Around the clubhouse turn, Whirlwind is
staking out a big lead, a couple of
lengths. Quadruped fighting it out and
coming up fast, Chew My Shoe.

FINISH LINE

Screwy the rabbit goes through finish line.

ANNOUNCER

And it's "Whirlwind" by a country mile,
and in second, "Chew My Shoe," followed
by "Dog O' War."

HOMER

(BLUBBERING)

BART

It doesn't seem possible but I guess
TV has betrayed me.

HOMER

I don't want to leave till our dog
finishes.

They watch for a long BEAT.

HOMER

Ah, forget it. Let's go.

Homer extends his hand to Bart and they walk off.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD DOWNS PARKING LOT

Bart and Homer are wandering around, bending over and
picking up discarded tickets.

HOMER

Find any winners, son?

BART

Sorry, Dad.

Barney HONKS joyously as he drives by. He has his arm
around a beautiful woman.

BARNEY

Hey hey Simpson! (BRANDISHING MONEY)

What'd I tell you... Whirlwind. (BURPS)

(TO WOMAN) Let's go, Daria.

Barney leaves as Bart and Homer continue walking around the parking lot, still looking for tickets.

Across the parking lot in the distance, a VOICE grows louder.

VOICE (O.S.)

Beat it! Scram! Get lost! You came
in last for the last time.

The voice's owner, a MAN in a porkpie hat, appears, chasing Santa's Little Helper, throwing stones at him.

BART

Look, Dad. It's Santa's Little Helper.

Santa's Little Helper runs right for Homer. The dog looks scared.

ANGLE

DOG'S P.O.V.

HOMER

Oh, no you don't. No. No. Get away from
me. Uh--uh.

Though he's backing up, Homer is growing larger in the dog's perspective.

DOG'S OWNER

And don't come back!

DOG

The dog running. A rock just misses him.

The dog leaps right into Homer's arms.

HOMER'S P.O.V.

The dog has huge eyes and looks at him pitifully, whimpering. He shivers.

BART

Is jumping up and down with excitement.

BART

Ah, can we keep him Dad, please?

HOMER

But he's a loser. He's pathetic.

He's...

The dog licks his face.

HOMER (CONT'D)

-- a Simpson.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - VERY LATE NIGHT

Maggie and Lisa have fallen asleep on their mother's lap. Marge looks worried. Grampa has fallen asleep in the rocking chair. His head has fallen backwards and he SNORES gently. Patty and Selma are dressed for bed.

SFX: LOUD CLOCK TICKING

MARGE

(TO HER SISTERS) Maybe I should call the police.

PATTY

Oh, he'll sober up.

SELMA

Yeah, and come staggering home.

PATTY

Hmmm, hmmm. Smelling of cheap perfume.

Suddenly the front door swings open. Marge leaps up. Grandpa wakes up.

GRANDPA

Oh, he's home.

MARGE

Homer.

HOMER

All right, look everybody. I have a
confession to make.

SELMA

This should be good.

Patty and Selma take seats to watch Homer as if watching a
television show.

HOMER

I didn't get my Christmas bonus. I
tried not to let it ruin Christmas for
everybody, but no matter what I did, I
just couldn't --

Just then Bart enters with Santa's Little Helper who is
YAPPING.

BART

Hey, everybody. Look what we got!

Dog licks Lisa and she wakes up.

LISA

A dog! All right, Dad!

MARGE

This is the best gift of all, Homer.
Something to share our love

HOMER

It is?

MARGE

and frighten prowlers.

LISA

What's his name?

HOMER

Number eight. I mean, Santa's Little
Helper.

Marge gives Homer a kiss.

MARGE

(TO HER SISTERS) What do you say now,
girls?

They both make Marge-like annoyed MURMURS.

Maggie happily climbs aboard the dog. She yanks his collar
and the dog runs through the house circling through the
living room repeatedly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RUMPUS ROOM

Everyone is gathered around the upright piano which Grampa
is playing. The dog, "Santa's Little Helper", periodically
runs through the room with Maggie aboard.

EVERYONE

(SINGING) Rudolph the Red-nosed
Reindeer, had a very shiny nose, and if
you ever saw it, you would even say it
glows.

BART

Like a lightbulb.

HOMER

Bart!

EVERYONE

(SINGING) All of the other Reindeer,
used to laugh and call him names...

LISA

Like Shnozzola.

HOMER

Lisa!

EVERYONE

(SINGING) They never let poor Rudolph,
join in any reindeer games...

BART

Like strip poker.

HOMER

I'm warning you two --!

EVERYONE

(SINGING) Then one foggy Christmas eve,
Santa came to say...

MARGE

Take it, Homer.

HOMER

Uh... (SINGING) Rudolph get your nose
over here, so you can guide my
sleigh... today.

GRAMPA

Beautiful, Homer.

Everyone gives Homer a look.

EVERYONE

(SINGING) Then all the reindeer loved
him, and they shouted out with glee,
Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, you'll
go down in history.

BART

Like Attila the... (CHOKE)

Homer GROWLS and grabs Bart by the throat. Santa's Little
Helper BARKS.

FADE OUT:

TO BLACK

THE END